United Nations E/2001/60

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 May 2001
English
Original: Spanish

Resumed organizational session of 2001
Item 2 of the agenda
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Note verbale dated 3 May 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in connection with the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, to be held from 2 to 27 July 2001 in Geneva, has the honour to request, in accordance with the provisions of rule 9 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, the inclusion in the provisional agenda of a supplementary sub-item under item 14 entitled "Membership of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues" (see annex).

The Government of Mexico attaches great importance to the consideration of this item by the Economic and Social Council. Therefore, in accordance with rule 12 of the Council's rules of procedure, an explanatory memorandum on the item is annexed hereto for the Council's consideration.

01-36258 (E) 080501 090501

Annex to the note verbale dated 3 May 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Explanatory memorandum on the integration of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in June 1993, recommended that the General Assembly should consider the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I, chap. III)). In its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, the General Assembly proclaimed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and requested the Commission on Human Rights to give priority consideration to the establishment of a permanent forum. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1995/30 of 3 March 1995, recommended that the Centre for Human Rights should organize a workshop on the proposed forum.

Under the auspices of the Government of Denmark, the Centre for Human Rights held the first workshop on a permanent forum for indigenous people in Copenhagen from 26 to 28 June 1995. The report of the workshop is contained in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1995/7. One of the suggestions made by the workshop was that the Secretary-General should review the existing mechanisms, procedures and programmes within the United Nations system concerning indigenous people. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995, recommended that the Secretary-General should undertake such a review. This review, contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/493), was submitted to the General Assembly at its 1996 session. The General Assembly, in its resolution 51/78 of 19 December 1996, welcomed the review and recommended that the Commission on Human Rights should consider the convening of a second workshop on the establishment of a permanent forum; this workshop was held in Santiago, Chile, from 30 June to 2 July 1997. The report of the seminar is contained in document E/CN.4/1998/11.

The Secretary-General, in his report on the implementation of the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (A/52/509) of 16 October 1997, stated that one of the objectives of the Decade was the establishment of a permanent forum. In its resolution 1998/20, the Commission on Human Rights decided to establish an open-ended inter-sessional ad hoc working group to elaborate and consider further proposals for the possible establishment of a permanent forum. In its resolution 1999/52 of 27 April 1999, the Commission on Human Rights decided to establish an open-ended inter-sessional ad hoc working group on a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system. In its resolution 2000/87 of 27 April 2000, the Commission on Human Rights recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it should approve the establishment of a permanent forum on indigenous issues. In its resolution 2000/22 of 28 July 2000, the Economic and Social Council decided to establish the forum in question.

On the basis of the foregoing, and pursuant to Council resolution 2000/22, the Government of Mexico requests the inclusion of a sub-item under item 14 entitled "Membership of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues" in order to consolidate the Forum and enable it to begin its consideration of indigenous issues within the mandate of the Council relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.